

CDL Program changes and impact

A. Revising the CDL Knowledge and Skills testing requirements

FMCSA reviewed all states' existing commercial knowledge and skills testing procedures and found they were an inadequate reflection of the knowledge and skills required for today's commercial drivers. It has been over 16 years since the development and implementation of the current CDL testing standards.

To support and promote one national standard for CDL testing, FMCSA revised the commercial testing standards by adopting enhanced scoring criteria, requiring a visual vehicle inspection test, and adding a third basic maneuver (off-set backing).

Texas Impact

A review of all driver license office locations revealed that only one (1) office had adequate space available to safely implement the new CDL testing maneuvers.

The department determined that using a consolidated CDL testing business model, similar to what has proven to be successful in other states, would be more cost effective than developing CDL testing facilities in all of our driver license offices. Currently, 94% of all CDL testing conducted in Texas is occurring within a 50 mile radius of the 25 proposed CDL testing sites as depicted in the accompanying map.

In order to mitigate the adverse impact on Texas CDL licensees, the Department is pursuing cooperative agreements with other state agencies and local governments to provide temporary solutions for additional CDL testing sites.

B. Minimum Standards for Issuing CLPs and CDLS

New FMCSA standards will require a commercial applicant to:

- Pass the commercial knowledge exam prior to being issued a CLP
- Apply and hold a CLP for 14 days prior to testing for a CDL

- Prohibit the issuance of a CLP for longer than 180 days

- Only allow one CLP renewal without retesting
- Only hold one CLP at a time
- Adhere to the same traffic and criminal laws that apply to a CDL holder
- Apply all disqualifications to a CLP holder

Texas Impact

The new federal minimum standards require legislative action to amend the Texas Transportation Code to ensure Texas' compliance. The department will provide assistance and support to the legislature as requested to align Texas statutes with the requirements.

C. Upgrades to the Commercial Driver License System (CDLIS)

Commercial drivers frequently move between states based upon work demands. To ensure these commercial drivers maintain only one license and one driver record, states must exchange driver information through the Commercial Driver License Information System (CDLIS).

This enables states to report offenses, convictions, and disqualifications on CDL and CLP holders to ensure sanctions are applied as required by both state and federal statute. In order to continue facilitating the ease with which commercial driver information is exchanged between those states, FMCSA has mandated states to complete the necessary upgrades (version 5.3) to CDLIS.

Texas Impact

These changes require the Department to exchange commercial issuance and skills testing information with other states during the CDL and CLP issuance and renewal process. Due to existing internal resource constraints, the Department is at risk of not completing the CDLIS programmatic changes by July 2015.

Texas Department of Public Safety

Impact of New Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Regulations on Texas' Commercial Driver License Program

DRIVER LICENSE DIVISION



Creating a faster, easier, trendier driver license experience and a safer Texas

February 2015

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